

A CHANCE TO SPEAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON
FATHERS FROM LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES

By

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A CHANCE TO SPEAK: AQUALITATIVE STUDY ON
FATHERS FROM LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES

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Title of Study: A CHANCE TO SPEAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON FATHERS
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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to highlight the myriad ways Black fathers residing in lower income areas are taking an active role in physically, educationally, and emotionally developing their children. 13 Black fathers ranging in age from 31-46 were interviewed. Three fathers were single, eight were married, and two were divorced. The number of children fathers had ranged from one to 10. To analyze the data, the author used content analysis. Overall, fathers felt they were involved in all areas of their children's lives. They thoroughly discussed what physical, emotional, and financial presence meant to them and how they employ each of the strategies with their children. For physical presence, fathers wanted to be around their children and spend time either playing games or going to the games of their children. Fathers ensured they told their children how much they loved and appreciated their children both with words and affection. Financially, the fathers made it clear to their children in knowing the difference between needs and wants as well as getting their children ready for independence. Schooling inside the classroom as well as in life was something the fathers highlighted when discussing ways they take an active role in educating their child. Finally, fathers stated it was critical for their children to enjoy learning because that creates better connections in the child's brain and allows the child to be fully engaged with the topic.

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CHAPTER I

A CHANCE TO SPEAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON FATHERS FROM LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES.

Thesis Organization

The following thesis is comprised of three chapters. In the first chapter, a brief overview of the literature on Black fathers is given. The second chapter is a manuscript which will be submitted to the *Journal of Black Studies* and it will discuss the disparate ways Black fathers take an active role in the development of their children. A general conclusions section will wrap up the document.

Introduction

A total of 24.7 million children in the United States are not living in the same household as their biological father (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Five percent of children born in 1960 were born to unmarried women. That number has octupled to 40% in 2014 (Hamilton, Martin, Osterman, & Curtin, 2015). The marriage rate has decreased by 20% from 72% in 1960 to 52% in 2008 (Pew Research Center, 2008).

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to highlight the myriad ways Black fathers residing in lower income areas are taking an active role in physically, educationally, and emotionally

developing their children. In regards to this thesis topic, there are several gaps. According to Marsiglio, Amato, Lamb, and Day (2000, p. 1178), “an important legacy of this literature will be its role in encouraging scholars to expand their vision of fatherhood and paternal involvement while reinforcing the need to examine fathering within a systemic and ecological context.” The current research uses the ecological theory to pursue a greater understanding of Black fathers’ involvement with their children. Growing up in contemporary America, Black fathers may feel more responsible to give their children survival skills that other races may not have to. According to Cochran (2007, p.346), researchers should “provide an understanding of paternal role expectations from the perspectives of Black men.” This is important as most research regarding fathers derives from white middle class fathers (McAdoo, 1981; Nobles, 1985; Nobles & Goddard, 1984; Staples & Johnson, 1993) and mothers reports of father involvement (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2008; Choi & Jackson 2010, Choi, Palmer, Pyun, 2012; Johnson 2001; Laughlin, Farrie, & Fagan, 2009; Yogman, Kindlon, & Earls, 1995). With ecological theory as the framework, the author will also highlight contextual factors Black fathers teach their children how to navigate.

The research questions that guide this research are: (1) what are some strategies through which Black fathers are physically, emotionally, and financially present for their children, (2) how are fathers taking an active role in the schooling of their children, and (3) how do fathers foster a lifelong joy of learning for their children?

Black Fatherhood Research

According to Cochran (1997), Black father research can be divided into two categories: teen fathers and adult fathers. Many researchers have been interested in teenage black fathers (Christmon, 1990; Kiselica, 1995; McAdoo, 1990; Miller, 1994; Rivara, Sweeney, & Henderson, 1986; Rivara, Sweeney, & Henderson, 1987;). Rivara et al. (1986) launched a longitudinal study assessing teen fathers' attitudes about education as well as their employment. During the final point of data collection, fathers tempered their expectations about educational attainment and being employed. The researchers also found 95% of the fathers were paying child support. The family of the fathers had positive attitudes towards the child and assisted in caretaking responsibilities (Rivara et al., 1986).

In a follow up study, twenty four children were conceived from the final data collection point of the previous study. Also, fathers were more likely to become a father again if they had a similar aged family member having a child (Rivara, Sweeney, & Henderson, 1987). Christmon (1990) researched teenage fathers' willingness to assume fatherhood roles. The researcher found adolescents with a positive self-image and held high expectations were more likely to assume their roles as fathers. Miller (1994) wanted to learn more about what influences father involvement. Emotional and social support improved father involvement as well as making the father a part of the decision making process with situations concerning his child. The aforementioned study also found stress to be detrimental to father involvement. McAdoo (1990) argued that in order to truly understand the diverse circumstances adolescent fathers face, researchers need to include contextual factors in their research and use choice or exchange theory to guide their research. Similar to what McAdoo (1990) requested, Kiselica (1995) viewed society's

impact on Black adolescent fathers using a sociocultural perspective, noting teenage pregnancy was not solely a Black issue but an issue a lot of American families encounter. The researcher stated Black adolescents have difficulty finding employment due to not only low educational attainment but also racism and prejudice. In order to guide adolescents towards a thriving future the researcher recommended, the need for more Black mentors, church involvement and community programs. Black fathers have shown to be an intriguing for researchers.

Black adult fathers were of interest to researchers as well (Ahmeduzzaman & Roopnarine, 1992; Bowman, 1993; Bryan & Ajo, 1992; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1994). Within Black families, fathers take on the responsibility of provider, nurturer, and decision maker (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1994). According to Ahmeduzzaman and Roopnarine, (1992) fathers with a high socioeconomic status, educational level and support from family members show the highest amount of father involvement compared to fathers in any other financial or educational background and social support systems. According to Bowman (1993), family structure impacts a father's view of his role within his family. Sixty percent of married fathers worried about their family's economic status. Bryan and Ajo (1992) were interested in a parallel topic as Bowman (1993) and the researchers found employment and income were positively related to role perception and fathers who worked full time and held "sufficient annual incomes" had the greatest influence of their role. Understanding the roles fathers play in their children's development was important to researchers but they realized they needed to figure out what happens to children when fathers are not in the picture.

Developing Without a Father

Children who do not have contact with their fathers have been found to partake in unsavory behavior (Hoffman, 2006; Karre & Mounts, 2012; Mokrue, Chen, & Elias, 2011; Pan & Farrell, 2006; Sterrett, 2009). According to Hoffman (2006), children residing in mother-only households exhibited more delinquent behaviors than adolescents from two parent households. Mokrue et al. (2011) conducted a study of adolescents living in two parents and single parent households. They found that boys and girls from single mother households exhibited higher levels of externalizing and internalizing behavior compared to adolescents living with two parents. Adolescent antisocial behavior decreased when fathers used a more authoritative parenting style with their children (Karre & Mounts, 2012). Adolescents living in single mother households drank more heavily, used drugs more frequently, and were more delinquent than adolescents living with two parents (Pan & Farrell, 2006).

CHAPTER II

A chance to speak: A qualitative study on fathers from lower income communities

A manuscript to be submitted to the *Journal of Black Studies*

Darrell H. Mercer Jr.

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to highlight the myriad ways Black fathers residing in lower income areas are taking an active role in physically, educationally, and emotionally developing their children. 13 Black fathers ranging in age from 31-46 were interviewed. Three fathers were single, eight were married, and two were divorced. The number of children fathers had ranged from one to 10. To analyze the data, the author used content analysis. Overall, fathers felt they were involved in all areas of their children's lives. They thoroughly discussed what physical, emotional, and financial presence meant to them and how they employ each of the strategies with their children. For physical presence, fathers wanted to be around their children and spend time either playing games or going to the games of their children. Fathers ensured they told their children how much they loved and appreciated their children both with words and affection. Financially, the fathers made it clear to their children in knowing the difference between needs and wants as well as getting their children ready for independence. Schooling inside the classroom as well as in life was something the fathers highlighted when discussing ways they take

an active role in educating their child. Finally, fathers stated it was critical for their children to enjoy learning because that creates better connections in the child's brain and allows the child to be fully engaged with the topic.

Literature Review

Black fathers are often viewed in contemporary contexts as uninvolved and irresponsible fathers (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Burton & Snyder, 1998; Gadsen, 1999; Hammer, 1997; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000). According to the Census Bureau (2012), 57.6% of Black children are not living with their biological father. The aforementioned statistic may assist individuals in positing that Black fathers are absent from their children's lives because he does not live with them. Similarly, other factors such as maternal gatekeeping, work obligations, or child support payments may come into play as to why Black fathers are not involved with their children (McBride, Brown, Bost, Shin, Vaughn, & Korth, 2005; Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Research measuring fathers' involvement has been viewed a from mothers' perspective (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2008; Choi & Jackson 2010, Choi, Palmer, Pyun, 2012; Johnson 2001; Laughlin, Farrie, & Fagan, 2009; Yogman, Kindlon, & Earls, 1995). Mothers' reports of fathers' involvement emphasize deleterious effects since mothers' and fathers' reports of fathers' involvement are vastly different (Coley & Morris, 2002). A few researchers even used the children to report about their fathers' involvement (Flouri, 2006; Menning 2006; Pleck & Hofferth, 2008).

The challenges associated with maternal reports' of father involvement are particularly pointed when fathers and their children do not co-reside or live in the same dwelling. Children and mothers who do not co-reside with fathers likely have an

incomplete and potentially biased understanding of the difficulties or barriers fathers confront in their daily lives. Providing for a family, navigating the legal system, as well as balancing work and fathering responsibilities can all create the impression that a father is uninvolved in his children's lives. For example, a father loses his job and is unable to provide for his family. If a researcher asks the mother about his involvement, she may report that he is "deadbeat" who does not pay child support. While what she is saying is true, it is only half the story. Fathers know what it takes to be a father but adverse and unexpected situations arise where they cannot fully take care of their responsibilities. Without researchers listening to the story from the father's perspective, the story is unknowingly left unfulfilled. A more deleterious effect of the one sided approach is that policies are created based on false information. Policymakers create policies they believe will be helpful for fathers but they could actually do the opposite of its intended meaning.

Defining Father Involvement

Since fatherhood research began in the early 1900's, researchers have discussed how best to define father involvement (Abel, 2012; Charnov, & Levine, 1987; Downer & Mendez, 2005; Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985; Lamb, Pleck, Perry & Bright, 2012; Marsiglio, Amato, Lamb & Day, 2000; Nettle, 2008; Parke, 2000; Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012; Thomas, Krampe, & Newton, 2008) Father involvement is a complex concept. Father involvement can be measured many ways and researchers have utilized disparate techniques to assess their desired outcome. Father involvement has been assessed with an instrument constructed by Mathematica Policy Research (Nettle, 2008; Perry & Bright, 2012; Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012), as frequency of contact (Mickelson, 2008; Thomas, Krampe, & Newton, 2008) or utilizing a uniquely

constructed model (Abel, 2012; Downer & Mendez, 2005). To assess father involvement, Abel, (2012) revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) Model of Parental Involvement Process. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (2005) model is comprised of three levels: personal motivation, parental efficacy, and invitations. Personal motivation can be described as why a parent decides to be involved in his or her children's schooling. Level two, personal efficacy, is how effective parents believe they can parent their child. Invitations is the third level and that involves how other people are engaging the parents to be involved in schools.

The most widely used and accepted measurement tool was created by Lamb et al. (1987). According to Lamb et al. (1987) there are three types of father involvement: engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. Engagement involves the daily activities a father does with his children (e.g. school work, conversing, eating with them etc.). When engaging with his child, a father gets a glimpse into his child's life. He gets to learn how his child views the world and what he can do to help his child navigate everyday occurrences. A father is accessible and available when he can be reached at any time by his children. This metric is useful because it allows for non-resident fathers to be involved as well. A non-resident father whom is not able to be involved in the daily household exchanges is still able to be involved because his child can call or contact him whenever he is needed. The final aspect of Lamb's (1987) measurement tool of father involvement is responsibility. Responsibility occurs when the father is taking a role in making engagements for his children (e.g. daycare arrangements, picking up from school, etc.) Each one of the previously mentioned concepts is an integral part of father involvement but do Black fathers father differently than their White counterparts?

Father Involvement

Researchers have studied how fathers are involved with their children (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, Horowitz, & Kinukawa, 2008; Cabrera, Fagan, & Farrie, 2008; Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, & Tamis-Lemonda, 2008; Carlson, 2006; Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2013; Fagan, 2000; Fagan, 2010; Fagan & Palkovitz, 2007; Hawkins, Amato, & Kin, 2007; Hohman-Marriott, 2011; Kotila & Dush, 2013; Laughlin, Farrie, & Fagan, 2009; Minton & Pasley, 1996; Thomas, Krampe, & Newton, 2008; Yogman, Kindlon, & Earls, 1995). According to Amato and Rivera, (1999), father involvement was negatively associated with problem behavior in their children. Bailey (1991) found fathers were more involved with a sick child when their spouse was employed full time. Cabrera, Fagan and Farrie (2008) discovered fathers who were involved before the birth of their child were also involved after the child was born. In the same study, the researchers also noted involved fathers were more likely to be committed to the mother of their child once they were involved with the child. According to Bronte-Tinkew et al. (2008), children of involved fathers are less likely to have mental impairments. The researchers also found that associations between interactions with physical care, paternal warmth, engaging in mentally adaptive games and object exploration were stronger with boys than they were for girls. Carlson (2006) found father involvement to be a mediator for family structure and adolescent behavior. Carlson (2006) also found father involvement to be negatively associated with the problem behavior of their adolescent. The researchers also found employment status and income level to be positively associated with father involvement. Fagan and Palkovitz (2007) found older and nonresident fathers to be less involved than younger and resident fathers.

Biological fathers interacted, played, partook in caregiving activities, and hung out more with their children than non-biological fathers (Fagan, 2010). According to Hawkins, Amato, and Kin (2007), father involvement was negatively associated with externalizing and internalizing behavior as well as positively associated with academic achievement. Compared to unmarried and cohabiting fathers, married fathers displayed the lowest level of father involvement (Hohman-Marriott, 2011). Resident fathers were more involved than non-resident fathers (Kotila & Dush, 2013). In the same study, father involvement was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms for their children. According to Laughlin, Farrie, and Fagan, (2009) fathers with higher levels of education were more involved. Married fathers were more involved than divorced fathers (Minton & Pasley, 1996). Research on Black fathers show them actively taking part in their children's lives.

Black Father Involvement

Black fathers have proven to take a well-rounded approach to being a father (Abel, 2012; Achatz & McAllum, 1994; Ahmeduzzaman & Rooparine 1992; Baker, 2014; Chu, & Best, 2005; Cooksey & Fondell 1996; Julion, Gross, Barclay-Mclaughlin & Fogg, 2007; Perry & Bright, 2012; Perry et al., 2012; Salem, Zimmerman, & Notaro, 1998; Smith, Krohn, Thompson and Lawson, 1999; Yogman et al., 1995). According to Yogman et al. (1995), father involvement was positively associated with IQ scores of their children. Black fathers were found to be more involved than White fathers. (Cabrera et al. 2008; Fagan & Palkovitz 2007). According to Castillo, Welch and Sarver (2013), Black fathers were more involved with their children than Hispanic fathers. When compared to White and Latino fathers, Black fathers are more concerned about their children's cognitive development (Toth & Xu, 1999) than White and Hispanic and

weekly contact with their children was double the rate of White and Hispanic fathers (Walker, Reid, & Logan, 2010). According to Baker (2014), older and single Black fathers played less with their kids than younger and married fathers. Also, Black fathers played more with their daughters than their sons. In the same study, the lower the amounts of depression and stress a father has, the more frequently he plays with his children. Baker (2014) also studied the caregiving responsibilities and literacy teachings of the father. The more hours of work a father had as well as having a good relationship with the mother led to the fathers doing more caregiving activities. Also, the more children a father had equated to fewer amount of time spent caregiving for his children. When it comes to home literacy training, fathers with high levels of depression were negatively associated with the child's home literacy activities (Baker, 2014). According to Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013), a father's expectation was negatively associated with the grade point average of their sons.

Why Black Fathers?

According to Livingston and McAdoo (2007), Black fathers differ than any other race when it comes to being a father. Compared to their father, Black men were more involved in caretaking activities (i.e., changing diapers, bathing the child, etc.) (Cazenave 1979). Research has shown that Black fathers are nurturing, expressive, and partake in communicating with their child (Ahmeduzzaman & Rooparine 1992; Cooksey & Fondell 1996; Doherty, Kouneski, Erickson 1998). Compared to White families, the decision making process is more egalitarian in Black families (Barbarin 1983). Black women had to work to bolster family income leading to an equal power structure in a family (Wilke, 1993).

Black fathers in the 60's and 70s were viewed as stern, unresponsive and unemotional (Baumrind 1968; McAdoo 1979). One rationale for the fathers being viewed this way was fathers were protecting their child from the outside world and preparing them for the racist environment they would encounter in society (Julian, McKenry, & McKelvey, 1994). Techniques used by Black fathers to teach their children to enjoy learning and life lessons could be a critical tenet in helping their children navigate the stressors of everyday life.

Black Father Involvement and Education

Researchers have conducted studies regarding Black fathers' involvement in their children's educational and cognitive development (Abel, 2012; Baker, 2013; Bright & Williams, 1996; Bronte-Tinkew et al, 2008; Choi et al, 2012; Downer & Mendez, 2005). According to Choi et al. (2012), a positive association was found between a father's payment of child support and the cognitive development of the child. Abel (2012) found fathers were more involved when someone invites them to school functions. In the same study, the context in which a father resides can determine whether or not he communicates with the school or is involved with the school at all. According to Bronte-Tinkew et al. (2008), fathers reduce the likelihood of cognitive deficiencies in their children when they are involved. Downer and Mendez (2005) found fathers preferred to be involved in educational activities at home rather than getting involved at a Head Start Facility. Co-parenting is associated with improved father involvement in academic activities.

Abel (2012) proved invitation to academic events is crucial to father involvement. When a father is invited to partake in academic activities with his child, he is much more

likely to become involved in the academic and cognitive development of his child. Children with more involved fathers were better emotion regulators according to their teachers. Also, the emotionality of the father affects his role in academic activities within the home. According to Baker, (2013) less depressed fathers did more school activities at home with their children than less depressed fathers.

Methodology

The data was collected for the present study, Voices of Tulsa Father's Study. Thirteen Black fathers were recruited to participate in the study. Fathers were recruited from North, East, and the West side of Tulsa with the help of non-profit organizations and word of mouth. The main requirement for fathers to be participants in the study is to have a biological adolescent child (age 12-18).

The aforementioned areas of Tulsa were selected for a couple of reasons. The first reason was obtain a sample of ethnically diverse fathers and the second reason is to allow fathers from lower income areas to tell their fatherhood story. Fathers needed to have adolescent children because by the time their child is an adolescent, they should have had ample opportunities to get involved in their children's lives.

Sampling Area

Participants were recruited from the North, East and West regions of Tulsa. The aforementioned regions were selected for their history of having lower income and ethnic populations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the ethnic distribution for Blacks, Whites, and Latinos, in the 74106 zip code area, a zip code in North Tulsa, is 74.4%, 13.5% and 7.3% respectively. Approximately, 21% of families in this zip code are composed of a husband and a wife, 6.4% live in a single father and 32.7% reside in a

single mother led household. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), the average household value was \$41,500. The income per household was \$19,145 (US Census, 2010).

In West Tulsa, the major zip code is 74107. Within that zip code, the average home value is \$79,800 with the average household income being \$36,131. Whites, Blacks, and Latinos account for 69.4%, 9.7%, and 7.1% of the population respectively. Approximately, 39% of people live in a two parent, husband and wife arrangement. The percentages and for single father and mother headed households are 5.9% and 18.5% respectively. For comparison purposes, 74137 is a zip code in south Tulsa. The average household values \$208,000 and an average income per household of \$79,049 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol was broken up into several pieces: meaning of fatherhood, father presence, father absence, and a concluding section with questions about the fathers views on education (See Appendix B). At the beginning of the interview protocol, fathers were asked about their idea of fatherhood in general and what father presence or involvement meant to them. The next section discussed father presence. Within this section, fathers were asked what they believe father presence to be.

They also were asked ways a father can be physically, emotionally, and financially present in their children's lives. Following the father presence section, were questions regarding father absence. Fathers discussed how father absence affected them, if applicable, and what are some of the reasons fathers decide to be absent from the lives of their children. To conclude the interview fathers, were asked about their views on

education. The idea behind this question is to ascertain whether or not fathers from lower income areas value their children's education and how do they foster their child's intellectual development if they did feel it was important.

Procedures

Fathers of adolescents were recruited using a purposive sampling procedure through various measures (word of mouth, nonprofit organizations, etc.). A person from the organization would contact the author and give the author the participant's information. Once the connection was made between the author and the participant, the two met at a mutually agreed upon location (e.g., OSU-Tulsa, public library, participant's home, etc.). At the mutually agreed upon location, the author reviewed the informed consent form with the participant.

The participant was told about the purpose of the study, how his information would be handled, how he would be compensated, his risks with being involved in the study, and who he can call if he has any further questions. After, the participant reviews the consent form on his own, he agrees to the terms, signs the informed consent form and the interview commenced. At this point, the audio recorder is turned on. The interview begins with some basic demographic questions (e.g., how many kids does the participant have, how old are his kids, how old is he, is he married, etc.). Following the demographic questions, the author asked the fathers to define fatherhood. After learning of the definition of fatherhood the author inquired about the participant's view of father presence. Next, the fathers discussed the relationship they have with their father and how that impacts the way they father their children, followed by a section regarding father absence. To conclude the interview with the fathers, the author asked the fathers about

their views on education and the techniques they employ to help their children's brains develop and whether or not their children should enjoy learning. At the conclusion of the interview, fathers were compensated \$10 for their time and a receipt was signed by them and given back to the author.

After the interview was completed, the author transported the interview to Oklahoma State University-Tulsa and imported the data into a computer in the Center for Family Resilience. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by the author. The interviews were approximately an hour and a half. The interviews were then transcribed.

Analytic Plan

Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is a technique used to identify themes, patterns, biases and meanings using a detailed and systematic approach (Berg & Latin, 2008). It can be used with photographs, videos, and/or voice recordings. In order to analyze the data, it must be transformed into text. Researchers are split between whether this method is qualitative or quantitative (Berg & Latin, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Neuendorf, 2002). To diminish from researcher bias, the author viewed the data through an inductive reasoning lens. Concepts were counted within the content analysis based upon the research questions asked. Content analysis was selected to explore the meaning attached to fathering by Black adult males.

NVivo qualitative analysis software was used in conjunction with content analysis to analyze the interview data (Nvivo, 2015). Interview transcripts were input into the NVivo software. With an insider-outsider perspective as a Black male who is not from Tulsa, the author open coded the data to generate as much themes as possible. The author then utilized the constant comparative method to code the data even further. Once the

data was coded, the researcher ran a word frequency query for the physical presence, emotional presence, and financial presence nodes as well as for the education and enjoy learning nodes. The results are as follows.

Results

Three research questions were asked to guide this research: (1) what are some strategies through which Black fathers are physically, emotionally, and financially present for their children; (2) how are fathers taking an active role in the schooling of their children; and (3) how do fathers foster a lifelong joy of learning for their children?

Research Question #1: What are some strategies through which Black Fathers are physically, emotionally, and financially present for their children?

Physical Presence

The top five concepts explaining physical presence were “going” 33 times, “kids” 29 times, “game” 23 times, “physical” 20 times, and “time” 20 times. Putting all the concepts together paints a picture of fathers being in their children’s presence by spending time with them. Physical presence can be narrowed down to simply being there (i.e. vacation, spend as much time with his children as possible, showing up to his children’s events, etc.). Fathers who are around their children learn nuggets of information otherwise lost by a father who is not around his children. Father specifically talked about taking his children on vacation and being honest with their children.

I hang out with them a lot. You know what I am saying I spend time with my kids. Uh we go places. Take em on vacation. Show em that it is other things than Tulsa. Um me and my wife be going on vacation.

“...But you know, just keep your word with them. Be straight up with them. Um use every moment you can as teachable moments to bring you guys closer and just I mean

spend as much time as you can.” A different father talked about ensuring his children were going in a down the desired path. Fathers cannot show their children which path in life to take unless he is involved with his child. On the path, the child will stumble but fathers are a stabilizing force that counteracts any negativity or impediments the child will face.

When you sat there and look at certain things going on in their lives. You got to put yours on hold a little bit to make sure that you are there to make sure they are going down the right path.

Sometimes the fathers were worried about sacrificing their own time to make their child happy simply by showing up to an event. The sacrifices fathers make for their children do not go unnoticed. Children thrive when their father shows up to something that is important to them. A father who is willing to take time off of work or stop what he is doing to show his child how important that child is to him, allows for a deep and meaningful connection to be made.

I am sacrificing this time so I am going to go. I will say um in certain situation I honestly feel that some children that have both parents and have that male in the home really do not understand what it is like not to have one and this is my game so I know that my dad is going to be there. It is a given he is going to be there but a strong physical parent or presence for a child dad is not there. For that dad to show up unannounced to their game that means a lot man. Um yeah I guess that is you know just making sure that they are there.

When conversing about physical presence fathers were concerned about being there for their children whereas emotional presence was about expressing themselves.

Emotional Presence

The top five concepts for emotional presence were “kids” 64 times, “emotions” 53 times, “talk” 38 times, “needs” 28 times, and “love” 24 times. Fathers were mixed about expressing emotions towards their children. One father did not believe it was

acceptable to show a more emotional side of himself. His belief in not showing emotion did not stem from societal pressures of the stern and stoic father image but from his ideology that a man should always be in control.

I would not display full emotions around a child. I think that those things should be a controlled item as adults. You have to or you should in my personal opinion control your emotions around your child. That gives them the example of controlling your emotions and when they become upset not lashing out and so I got into a argument.

Others fathers were a bit more open when it comes to expressing their emotions. Expressing emotions was completely acceptable for some fathers and, in some cases, an essential part of being a father. Having an emotional side was not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of the flexibility fathers have in their parenting duties.

I told my coaches, ay lighten up on these kids because this physical way of coaching and getting all up in they face and ra ra this or ra ra that. A lot of times that do not get your point across. So to be emotional, it is ok to cry with your kids. It is ok to hug your kids. It is ok to hold their hands and walk in the park. That is what emotional is to me.

Emotionally. Hmm I believe you can be emotionally present a lot. I think fathers have to be open minded to a whole lot of things and it is hard to be open minded when you shut down... I know it is hard for somebody to have their emotions on their sleeves. They try to play a little tough but a lot of fathers are really soft on the inside. Really be hurting and some really be soft. You got to be able to be tough when it needs to be tough and then being uh soft and loving when it is needed too and so I think if you can balance that out.

Love was also a concept the fathers highlighted when the topic of emotional presence was broached. A father who loves his children protects them from being hurt later on in life. When a father loves his child unconditionally, he allows his child the freedom to be whatever he or she desires to be. A child who knows he or she has support will stretch and grow into his or her full potential because he or she will be uninhibited by thoughts or doubt and fear.

You know when a woman has not experienced you know a loving relationship with a man that just and usually that first relationship is with a father. Um that just loves them unconditionally not because of something that they bring to the table or that they do for them but just because they are a human being um most often that first love experience like that comes from a father and it is different than they can get from a grandfather or a uncle. It is that father love.

Other fathers viewed discipline as a form of love. Discipline was never about power or control with the fathers the author interviewed. It was a tool used to ensure their children knew there are consequences to their actions and to set boundaries for behavior. Values that they have learned in their life and held close to their heart.

We know that whether it is corporal or you know verbal or natural consequences um there are consequences that come with actions and um I think that when you have parents that that discipline children out of love and allow for a growth to occur. You strengthen that emotional um you strengthen their for one you strengthen their bond to you and then you assist them with managing their emotions.

You have to emotional support which is the soft skills, the caring, the compassion, the understanding even in discipline. Disciplining with love I could love you at the same time but I am still going to discipline you. So I have the love but it is going to be some discipline in between. Once you can make that work. Kids will respect you and understand where fathers come from.

Love has even been linked with communication and support from the father. In order to build a bond with their children, fathers needed to converse and learn about what their children love. The deep connection a father has with his children could largely be due to the trust his children have with him. In order to truly learn who their child is, fathers needed to sit down and have a conversation with their child. With concerned looks on their faces fathers discussed the importance of communication.

More talks and that conversation is it. That is it. That is where that fatherhood really kicks in that is where the power comes in. the

conversation. Whether it is a little conversation or a big conversation so yeah and children they love that too.

one of the most consistent things with me was that they know that if they call me whatever time or day or night that I will be there and for them that is stabilizing um knowing that there is never a situation that is too great or I can never do something is so bad that I will not have his support. You know or his love.

You know dad being a showing their softer side is ok and you know showing it in a masculine way. Let them know that hey even though this dude is sitting over here you think that he would bust you up if you do something wrong he is still able to come over and still tell you that he loves you. Uh and let you know that you know

Whereas emotional presence focused on the many aspects of love between a father and his child, financial presence focused on values.

Financial Presence

The top five concepts for financial presence were “money” 53 times, “kids” 51 times, “make” 31, “needs” 31, and “want” 29 times. Needs versus wants was a big talking point among fathers with their children. They stressed the importance of prioritizing needs above wants.

Well uh one of the things I do not want him to feel is everything that you do there are certain things that are going to come up in life and you cannot always get what you what you what you want. You have to get what you need to uh yeah I am saying that right. There are certain things that you have to sacrifice

I try to teach my kids. They needs and they wants. You got that. From your needs I mean like I could tell my son like do you really need this game or do you want that game? He understands that so.My oldest I do because he is at that age now probably at the age where I had him at that age 17 but I do not want him to do that but right now he is so focused in basketball so we good on that part but from his needs. He likes to have KD's. We can't do that. I mean cause that is not a necessary thing. It is not a must but that is a material so he understands though.

If it is something one of those one hundred and fifty dollar tennis shoes and my ex-wife is sending me these pictures. Surely there is a cheaper pair of shoes out there that are quality. ...So I get them what they need and

they have seen that. Whatever it is they have to have whether it is school supplies books or you know we are going to have those things and on occasion you know they want something special I am going to be able to do that for them but it is not all the time so they learn to appreciate it when they do get those things.

Teaching their children to be financially responsible allows the fathers to show values to their children. Fathers wanted their children to be sensible with money. For example with sneakers, they fathers explained their stance as the most expensive or most known doesn't always mean better. Shoes are needed but the most expensive pairs are usually wanted. I believe the fathers in this study would agree with the "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should" philosophy in life.

Research Questions #2: How are fathers taking an active role in the schooling of their children?

The top five concepts for ways fathers are involved in their children's schooling were "education" 74 times, "learning" 71 times, "teaching" 49 times, "think" 48 times, and "life" 43 times. In regards to the schooling of their children fathers repeatedly communicated the role of the father is not solely to parent but it is also to help their child learn by teaching them. Parents, and more specifically fathers, are a child's first teacher. Children learn how to walk, eat, and speak years before stepping into a classroom.

I firmly believe that it is important to learn that just something one thing. That even if it is just one word out of the dictionary that you did not know yesterday you know. Learn something new today plus when we talked about poverty earlier you know education is the equalizer. That is the only you know means by which um you can overcome poverty um and it does not necessarily have to be book education. It can be educating yourself about a area of interest that you become a expert in but you become the subject matter expert in that field or you become an entrepreneur. Um that is learning but that requires some learning. So yeah I mean to me that I just the only way um to continue to you know um to exist in a positive manner is that you learn something real important.

You know the education, the respect, definitely. If they do not see you being respectful to each other, how can you teach them to be respectful? Uh you cannot depend on the school systems to raise the kids and teach them education. You go to start your kids early. Teaching them numbers colors, shapes ABCs. So everything starts at home.

The education did not just stop with school subjects. Fathers also taught their children about the facts of life. They were teaching their children about surviving in today's society and how to attain goals in life. Support, guidance, and love are all key to fathers teaching their children. Children will falter but fathers unwavering support will allow to the child to achieve whatever he or she desires.

Try to teach them. The guidance. I try to teach them right from wrong. It is just all about your presence. If you are a respectful person, people will treat you right. You know if you not respectful, bad attitude negative all the time and people do not want to be around you. You are not friends. So always be respectful. Respect yourself first of all. Start with yourself. Love yourself and respect yourself because if you do not love yourself, you cannot love nobody else... I try to teach my daughter right from wrong and bad men. I tell her what men is looking for. What men will and try to do to you. They will say this oh you look pretty and cute this just this and that to get what they want so I think she understood it.

That is the only job a parent has is to relate and you can equate this to any animal in any forest or jungle or park. I do not care if it is a bird or if it is an elephant or anything that is in between. That parent is going to teach that child that offspring how to survive in that environment... Let us look at today's society with the Black and White situations and the racial tensions. A black child is raised differently as far as survival skills versus a Caucasian child. Those are two separate and total different survival techniques and independent things that need to be learned from each one. A white person does not have to learn what a black person does and vice versa. It does not transfer. So it depends on the parent. The education that the parent have for that child.

You know uh the world is yours. Conquer it. Go get what you desire and the things that you want. Do not settle. You know what I mean. You try to teach them not to settle. Reach for the stars.

The lessons fathers tell their children about life may be more important to than formal schooling because life continues even after school ceases. Children will grow into

adults and live in a world, the educational system does not prepare them for. The life lessons a father teaches his children end up being the moral compass for the children's lives. That knowledge could be passed on through several generations. With education being at the forefront of working with their children, fathers were asked how they assisted their children in continuing to learn outside of school

Research Question #3: How do fathers foster a lifelong joy of learning for their children?

The top five concepts for fathers getting their children to enjoy learning were "learning" 30 times, "life" 14 times, "think," 13 times, "brain" 10 times and "people" and "benefit" 6 times. Every father interviewed felt it was important for their children to enjoy learning. They expressed why having joy while learning is key to knowledge acquisition. Fathers indicated if the child, or anyone, does not take interest in the subject, learning would be more work than fun.

I think that if you enjoy it then it will not be tedious and will not be a task. Um if you enjoy it um I mean I just think that it is stimulating to the brain and now that there are means by which we are beginning to understand the brain and its functioning and capacity more. Um you know learning is how we create new neurological pathways. You know you making connections that were not there before when you learn something new

Well I mean it is like anything in life. If you do not enjoy it, you are not going to do it that often. So learning has to be something that is fun. They have to get some kind of enjoyment out of it. ... that we played to keep everything fun and exciting and I try to teach and tell them that learning is simply being able to recall memories that you have stored in your brain. That is all learning is and so we grow our brain and work on recalling certain aspects where we have to store certain information.

Not only did fathers want their children to enjoy learning, they felt the information should be coupled with real world knowledge. An example of applying knowledge to real world application could be algebra and business. If teachers were to

use algebra in conjunction with money, fathers believed the students are more apt to find the subject matter excitable.

I think so. I think it is I real important. I think you will get more out of them. They will find new ways to learn if they like it, they will explore more and they will ask more questions but if they are bored with it. If they do not like the teacher. You know if it is too taxing on them you know they will shut down and it will be something that they will not even try to pursue anymore or even try to learn anymore.

You know what I think that I think that it is very important that a child enjoys learning. Uh because they are able to adapt some of their life's experiences. When a teacher is educating or a child is getting educated, I think that is very important because they can adapt those things they are learning to their regular life, their regular ongoing life and situations. Um when there is not application to real life situations then that can be somewhat boring.

As I have learned, a father is much more than a parent. He is a guide, teacher, and support system that is crucial to developing into a well-rounded human being. The role of the father cannot be understated as the conversations with the fathers have highlighted how much of an impact their fathers had on their development. Without their fathers support and love, they would not have been upstanding members to society and begin the journey of fatherhood themselves.

Discussion

The goal of the present study was to find out all the different ways fathers take an active and comprehensive role in their children's lives. Overall, fathers felt they were involved in all areas of their children's lives. For physical presence, fathers wanted to be around their children and spend time either playing games or going to the games of their children. Fathers ensured they told their children how much they loved and appreciated their children both with words and physical affection. Financially, the fathers made it clear to their children in knowing the difference between needs and wants as well as

getting their children ready for independence. Schooling inside the classroom as well as in life was something the fathers highlighted when discussing ways they take an active role in educating their child. Finally, fathers stated it was critical for their children to enjoy learning because that creates better connections in the child's brain and allows the child to be fully engaged with the topic

Some qualitative studies have been conducted with Black fathers however those studies have been with mainly nonresident samples (Becerra, Thomas, & Ong, 2001; Fleck, Hudson, Abbot, & Reisbig, 2013; Hamer, 1998; Hammond, Caldwell, Brooks, & Bell, 2011; Roy, 2004). The current study is different because most of the fathers interviewed were resident fathers. Also, fathers discussed their views on educating their children inside and outside of the classroom.

Implications for Policy Makers, Counselors, and Families

When asked which presence, physical, emotional, or financial, was most important to them, the father routinely said either emotional or physical. The fathers were adamant that financially was the least important to them. Being connected to their child was the most important aspect of being a father to them. They love seeing their children grow every day as well as become fully independent and capable human beings. If they were strictly required to pay child support, then they would miss out on some of the most enjoyable aspects of fatherhood. I would recommend policy makers implement laws that require a father to be involved with his child. To substantiate the previous point, researchers have found children of involved fathers are smarter (Abel, 2012; Baker, 2013; Bronte-Tinkew et al, 2008; Choi et al, 2012; Downer & Mendez, 2005) and display less antisocial behavior (Karre & Mounts, 2012).

For counselors and families, I recommend getting fathers involved in activities with their children. Fathers discussed many times how often they enjoyed doing activities with their children. They talked about the memories they have with their father and a majority of the memories involved doing something with their dad. It could be something as simple as shooting the basketball together or as in depth as working together on a creative project. Partaking in an activity both of them enjoy will build a bond and create core memories for the child to remember when he or she has children.

Strengths and Limitations

A limitation of the current study is all of the fathers were fathers of adolescent children. Fathers who have adult children or fathers of newborn may offer different insight into fathering at different age groups. Another limitation of the research is that the researcher did not include any other races in the study. A comparison study between Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian fathers would allow researchers to see if there is any commonality or differences among the differing fatherhood groups.

Another limitation of the study was the study only researched fathers who were involved with their children. Uninvolved fathers may have insight into what father involvement looks like for them. Also, uninvolved fathers may have made the conscious choice or forced by governmental agencies to not be involved fathers. Fathers who decide not to be involved fathers can offer some insight into the decisions that made them not want to partake in the development of their child. Despite the previous limitations, there are some strengths to the current study.

The current study recruited Black fathers and was able to highlight diversity even among Black fathers. Fathers ranged in age from 31- 46 and had differing marital

statuses. Three fathers were single, eight were married, and two were divorced. The number of children fathers had ranged from one to 10.

One more strength for the current study is that Black fathers got the chance to voice their opinion on how they educated their child. Fathers educated their children far beyond school subjects and schooling does not start and end on school property. Schooling occurs at the grocery store, movie theatre, and museum. They taught their children about life and how to stay safe in a world that may want to harm them. Also, the fathers openly discussed techniques they employ to get their children to enjoy learning.

Future Directions

In the future, the author would like to have interviewed a more diverse sample. Interviewing White, Black, and Latino fathers about their fathering experiences would cause for a more robust lens to view fatherhood. Different races may put different emphasis on a certain area of fathering. For example, one father in the current study expressed the importance of teaching his son how to interact when in police custody. White and Latino fathers may teach their children other strategies to becoming a man like how to treat a woman, how to become integrated into a community, or even how to start and build a successful business. Research with other racial groups will allow for the questions to be answered with certainty.

Another area the author would like to explore is research with fathers who choose not to become involved. Knowing the mechanisms and thought patterns as to why fathers opt not to be active fathers could highlight changeable ideologies towards fatherhood. For example, if fathers decide not to be involved in fathering their children out of fear of “messing up” the child or not wanting responsibility, counselors could work with the

fathers and give them strategies to overcome their fear and become fearless and proactive fathers. With this knowledge, programs could be created help fathers ease into fatherhood instead of base-jumping into it.

CHAPTER III

General Conclusions

The goal of the present study was to find out all the different ways fathers take an active and comprehensive role in their children's lives. Overall, fathers felt they were involved in all areas of their children's lives. They thoroughly discussed what physical, emotional, and financial presence meant to them and how they employ each of the strategies with their children.

For physical presence, fathers wanted to be around their children and spend time either playing games or going to the games of their children. The children loved when their father took interest in something that their father did not have a personal stake with. Sacrificing personal endeavors to be at their children's events provided a glimpse into what fathers valued. They valued their children and whatever was of interest to their children became an interest to the fathers as well.

Fathers ensured they told their children how much they loved and appreciated their children both with words and affection. Love was displayed in many forms with the fathers. The fathers disciplined their children out of love but it was not to assert dominance and tell the child who was boss. Discipline was used as a corrective tool for fathers to make sure the right values are instilled in their child's brain.

Financially, the fathers made it clear to their children in knowing the difference between needs and wants as well as getting their children ready for independence. Fathers emphasized needs above wants because they did not want their children to get caught up into the crowd. For them, fostering independence in life started with thinking for yourself and not being swayed by the opinions of other people. The fathers also believed being financially present was the least important presence.

Schooling inside the classroom as well as in life was something the fathers highlighted when discussing ways they take an active role in educating their child. Fathers viewed themselves as teachers and life coaches. They taught their children how to walk, talk, and eat but also how to navigate everyday life. The lessons the fathers were teaching involved safety and preparing the child for life without them.

Finally, fathers stated it was critical for their children to enjoy learning because that creates better connections in the child's brain and allows the child to be fully engaged with the topic. If a person is not interested in a topic, learning will seem like work. Fathers stressed the importance of enjoying the learning process. When learning is fun, it is easier for children, and people in general, to retain the information given to them. Overall, enjoyment of the learning process makes education easier and less stressful.

Conclusion

In sum, the fathers interviewed did not fit the "deadbeat dad" stereotype often portrayed in the media. They were heavily involved in many areas of life for their children. The fathers wanted to be and strived for a deep and meaningful connection with their children. They wanted their children to prosper but they also made sure their

children were loved and cared for. Black fathers are not monopolar. They have disparate sides they show to their children. One day, he made me a stern disciplinarian and the next he could be a soft, warm, and affectionate teddy bear. It all depends on the situation and the relationship with the child.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Extended Literature Review

Roles of Fathers

Fatherhood research began by viewing the role of the father within the family. According to Lamb (2000) there have been four roles fathers have accepted over time: (a) moral guide/teacher, (b) provider/breadwinner, (c) sex-role model, and (d) the nurturing father. From puritan to colonial times, fathers were viewed as the moral compass for his children. His role was to teach his children right from wrong based upon the principles of the bible. One of his most important responsibilities was to teach his children how to read in order for them to read biblical verses. (Lamb, 2000). The “good” fathers of the time were the men who taught their children the basics of a Christian lifestyle (Demos, 1982; Voydanoff, 1984).

Around the industrial period, the role of the father began to change. Moving from an agrarian to a more industrialized lifestyle, caused the roles used in rural times to be abdicated and providing for his family financially became the most important role for a father (Voydanoff, 1984; Marsiglio, Amato, Lamb, & Day, 2000). It was important for him to be able to find work and make money to pay for the necessities a family needs to live in urban areas. The breadwinner role continued through the Great depression (Voydanoff, 1984).

In the 1930's and 40's fatherhood began to change into more of a role model for his children but more importantly his sons (Pleck, 1981). At this time, a few researchers did not believe fathers were doing a good job being a role model for their children (Strecker, 1946; Wylie, 1942).

A more nurturing father rose to prominence in the 1970's. It was at this point in time where fathers became more nurturing and were more involved in caretaking responsibilities of their children. The paragon of fatherhood was now a father who not only provided for his family but also was active in caregiving for his children (Lamb, 2000). In earlier decades, nurturing was important for being a good fathers but it wasn't a staple until the 1970's (Griswold, 1995).

Research Perspectives on Fatherhood

Fatherhood researchers have used copious perspectives to understand the complexity of fathers. Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987) created a tool to better assess father involvement. The survey assessed three areas of father involvement: (a) accessibility, (b) responsibility, and (c) engagement. Social capital was also a popular lens to study fatherhood phenomenon (Amato, 1998; Coleman, 1988; Furstenberg, 1998; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Hagan, Mac-Millan, & Wheaton, 1996). Social capital researchers study the influences social networks and communities have on fathers and their children. Using ecological theory, Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998) studied how different contexts effect the development of a child. Fathers are involved based upon the needs of their children rather than on the role fathers should play (Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). Generativity posits fathers are caring and want to see their good deeds passed down to another generation. When developmental psychologists began studying fatherhood, they were unsure about whether or not having an involved father made a difference in a child's life (Lamb, 1981). That thought changed in the 90's when researchers found linkages between father involvement and behavior (Lamb, 1997; Carson & Parke, 1996; Henggeler, Edwards, Cohen, & Summerville, 1991; Isley, O'Neil, & Parke, 1996) Also, in

the late 1990's, researchers used symbolic interaction to extract how men view and define their roles as fathers (Daly, 1995; Bruce & Fox, 1999; Futris & Pasley, 1997; Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, & Buehler, 1995; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Minton & Pasley, 1996).

Fatherhood by Race

Father involvement shows mixed results for Black fathers when compared to other races. Hispanic fathers are more nurturing than African American fathers (Fagan, 2000). African American and Latino fathers had higher levels of father involvement than White fathers (Cabrera et al, 2008). Latino fathers did less caregiving than African American and White (Leavell, Tamis-Lamonda, Ruble, Zosuls, & Cabrera, 2012). Black children were less engaged than White children and the researchers found no difference between White and Latino fathers (Hofferth, 2003). Black fathers reported lower levels of warmth, less favorable views on fathering but they did have more control and responsibility. (Hofferth, 2003) Latino fathers are less controlling but more likely to take on responsibilities than White fathers. (Hofferth, 2003) White adolescents experience more contact than Black and Latino adolescents (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). Black fathers invest more into cognitive development of their children. (Toth & Xu, 1999) Black fathers were twice as likely to have weekly contact (Walker, Reid, & Logan, 2010). According to Terriquez (2013) White and Latino fathers have similar levels of responsibility. Some researchers have solely conducted research on Black fathers.

Fatherhood and Family Structure

Some researchers were curious about the structure of the Black family and how that affects certain outcomes (Johnson, 2001; Coley & Hernandez, 2006; Perry 2009; Julion et al, 2007; Perry et al, 2012; Salem et al, 1998; Hofferth, 2003). According to Johnson (2001), compared to resident fathers, nonresident fathers gave less financial support to the mother of their children during pregnancy. Also, mothers who lived with the father of the developing fetus were more than twice as likely to receive a

visit from the father while she was in the hospital. Nonresident fathers who were in a romantic or non-romantic relationship with the mother were 2.4 and 16.7 times less likely to give money to the mother when compared to resident fathers.

Coley and Hernandez (2006) found results for father involvement for nonresident and resident father. For nonresident fathers, parental conflict and having a male child led to lower father involvement. Also having a partner who was older decreased father involvement. A stable source of income increased father involvement whereas being involved in illicit activities decreased father involvement for resident father. A good relationship with his father and being around during the birth of the child predicted higher father involvement. Perry (2009) found that visits from the mother's side of the family hindered father involvement. Julion et al, (2007) asked nonresident fathers about their experiences and perspectives. The four themes that were highlighter were: sharing and caring, guidance, support, and role specific responsibilities. The fathers felt their impediments to being involved were self-inflicted as they stated insecurities and doubts as hindrances for themselves.

Perry et al, (2012) found that fathers who were not married and who viewed themselves were more involved. Fathers who had low levels of parenting stress were also more involved. Also younger and more religious fathers were more involved. Mothers support positively predicted father involvement as well.

Salem et al (1998) researched how the family structure impacts adolescent's psychosocial behavior and their view of the father. The researchers found that adolescents who lived with their mother and some extended family members used marijuana more often. Also, adolescents who lived with their mother and step fathers had more favorable views of their father's role. Pleck and Hofferth, (2008) found being a step father and disagreements in marriage were negative predictors of father

involvement. A positive predictor of father involvement was the mother's involvement with her children.

The findings regarding Black resident father involvement are mixed. Compared to other races Black fathers are less engaged, display less warmth with their children, and have lower views of fathering (Hofferth, 2003). In the same study, Black fathers exhibited more responsibility and control than other races. Abel (2012) found father who were invited by other people to be involved and his life context was a factor in his involvement. Also, fathers play more with their daughters and men with a good relationship with the mother played more often with their children (Baker, 2014). The researchers also found some negative results. As the number of children increases the father's amount of caregiving decreases. Younger mothers and a father's high level of depression led to less home literacy training.

Fatherhood researchers have also studied the effect fathers have through familial concepts and on outcomes. Coley and Hernandez (2006) found that a child's difficult temperament predicted lower father involvement through parental conflict. The researchers also found that a mother's mental anguish predicted higher father involvement. Pleck and Hofferth (2008) found being a stepfather, marital conflict, and the age of the child were negative predictors of father involvement. However, they also found that mother's involvement positively predicted father involvement. Salem et al. (1998) found fathers who lives with their children decreases the usage of marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes and also the level of depression.

Despite not living with their children, non-resident Black fathers are still involved with their children. Hammond et al., (2011) found being the provider was very important but nurturing was equally important. They wanted to be there for their children because of what they missed out on as a son. The fathers also valued quality time with their children rather than just providing financial support. Smith et

al, (2005) found 61.8% of fathers have weekly contact with their children and fifty four percent stated they paid all of their child support on time.

Not all nonresident Black fathers were involved with their children. According to Johnson, (2001) during pregnancy nonresident fathers gave less money to the mother of their child than resident fathers. Also, mothers in cohabiting relationships were more than twice as likely to have the father visit in the hospital then non-cohabiting mothers. Non-resident fathers who were romantically or non-romantically involved 2.4 and 16.7 times less likely to provide financial support than cohabiting fathers respectively. (Johnson, 2001).

Nonresidential Black fathers experience roadblock become involved with their children. Becerra, Thomas, and Ong (2001) found parental conflict inhibited father involvement. According to Coley and Hernandez, (2006) the relationship the mother was very important in seeing their children. The mother of the child also used the child as leverage against him if she was not happy with him. (Hamer, 1998) Father involvement was also negatively impacted by visits from the mother's side of the family (Perry, 2009). Involvement in street crime diminished a father's chance of seeing his child (Smith et al, 2005).

Appendix B

“VOICES OF TULSA FATHERS”

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTRODUCTION: The aim of the “Voices of Tulsa Fathers” research study is to give father a chance to talk about their fathering experiences, as a father as well as a son. We would like you to be completely honest with your responses. There aren’t any right or wrong answers just answers based on your experience. We will discuss fatherhood and fathering. The first couple of questions are about your experiences with father presence as a child and an adult.

Do you have any questions? Let us begin.

THE MEANING OF FATHERHOOD

- A. Tell me about fatherhood.
- B. What does father presence mean to you?
- C. Here is a short scale for you to use. Here you see diverse four types of father presence. Please tell me which term best describes your father.
 - 1. **Represents a Responsibly Involved** Father. This father is available emotionally, financially involved in their lives, their care, meeting their needs, supporting their development on a day-to-day basis.
 - 2. **Reasonably involved** – having a financial, physical or emotional presence in the routines of the child’s life on a reasonably consistent basis.

3. **Average or moderately involved** – having less than day-to-day contact, but more than once per week; contributing to their emotional and physical needs on a regular basis.
4. **Minimally involved** (simply present) – participating in some way in their lives, every now and then, as you are able or allowed to do so.

FATHER PRESENCE AS A CHILD

Father Experiences: The following questions will ask about your father experiences as a child.

- D. What are the ways was your father present as child? (Probes: lived with you and mom, you lived with him; he visited you, you visited him, other)?
 - Describe the relationship the two of you have when you were growing up? (warm, distant, emotional, unaffectionate, some combination)
- E. What are all the ways a father can be *physically* present in the lives of his children?
 - Can you think of anymore?
- F. What are all the ways a father can be *emotionally* present in the lives of his children?
 - Are there any more ways?
- G. What are all the ways a father can be *financially* present in the lives of his children?
 - Can you think of any more ways?
- H. Which presence (i.e., physical, emotional, financial, other) is the most important to you?
 - Tell me more. (Why?)
- I. Describe the circumstance or situation that supported his being present (married to mom, committed relationship with mom, no relationship with mom but strong involvement with you, other)?
- J. What were barriers or hurdles you were aware of as a child, he had to get through to be present in your life (work hours, mom not allowing access, substance use/addiction, legal)?
- K. How do you think his presence benefited you as a child (birth to 12)?
 - As a teenager (13 to 18)
 - As an adult (18 and up)?
- L. In what ways has your father's presence affected your ideas about being a father?
- M. What are the ways that your father's presence in your life influences how you currently father your children?
- N. What were the barriers that you are now aware of any barriers or hurdles he had to get through to be present in your life (work hours, mom not allowing access, substance use/addiction, legal)
- O. What are ways your father was present as an adult?
- P. What kind of relationship do you have with your father now?
- Q. In what ways, if any, did your father's presence affect the type of man you are or are becoming?
- R. What could get in the way of you being present for your children?
 - How would you handle that?
- S. Finish this sentence: "I would be able to increase my time and presence with my children if _____?"

- T. What things support or contribute to the presence you have in your children's lives (e.g. good relationship with the mom, having a job, having my own place, having a car, my family's support, etc.)?
- U. Describe some ways that you benefit as a person or as a father from being present in your children's lives (feel better about myself, more motivated to achieve goals, take better care of myself, experiencing joy, etc.)?

Father Absence

- V. What does father absence mean to you?
- W. In what ways was your father absent when you were a child (not there at all, in the home sometimes, involved with you off and on)?
- X. Do you know or can you remember what circumstances contributed to his being absent as a child (incarceration, divorce, relationship with mom ending, he stayed away, mom kept him away, other)?
- Y. What are one or two things that you want or would have wanted from your father that he wasn't able to provide for you as a child?
- Z. Tell me how your father's absence affected you as a child?
 - Describe any ways that his absence affects you now as an adult?
- AA. In what ways has your father's absence shaped your ideas or motivation about being a father?
- BB. What are one or two things that you want from your father that he wasn't able to provide as an adult?
- CC. In what ways, if any, did your father's absence affect your development as a man or the type of man you are?
Describe the relationship you have with your father now.
- DD. Describe the absence you have with any of your children.
- EE. Looking back, what would you do, or what could you have done differently to avoid this absence?
- FF. What would it take from you to resolve this absence and reconcile you with your child/children?

Concluding:

I'm going to define four types of father presence. Please tell me which term best describes your father.

Responsibly involved – emotionally, financially involved in their lives, their care, meeting their needs, supporting their development on a day-to-day basis

Reasonably involved – having a financial, physical or emotional presence in the routines of the child's life on a reasonably consistent basis

Average or moderately involved – having less than day-to-day contact, but more than once per week; contributing to their emotional and physical needs on a regular basis

Minimally involved (simply present) – participating in some way in their lives, every now and then, as you are able or allowed to do so

- Do you encourage your child or children to do well in school?

- Why or why not?
- *If yes ask*, What are some ways you encourage your children to do well in school?
- Why is it important for your children to graduate from high school?
- Tell me whether or not it is important for children to enjoy learning?
 - Why or why not?
- What is an activity you can do to become more involved in the lives of your children?

That concludes our interview. I would like to thank you for allowing me to ask you some personal questions. Also, thank you for answering my questions honestly. Have a nice day!

Appendix C

Table #1: Demographic characteristics of study participants.

Participant #	Age	Marital Status	# of Kids
102	43	Single	10
103	44	Married	3
104	43	Married	3
105	41	Married	2
106	45	Married	3
107	41	Married	5
108	43	Married	1
109	40	Married	3
110	42	Divorced	7
111	38	Single	3
112	31	Single	4
113	47	Divorced	3
114	46	Married	2

Appendix D

Table #2: Research Question #1: Manifestations of Physical, emotional, and financial presence.

Physical Presence Concepts	# of times	Emotional Presence Concepts	# of times	Financial Presence Concepts	# of times
Going	33	Kids	64	Money	53
Kids	29	Emotions	53	Kids	51
Game	23	Talk	38	Make	31
Physical	20	Needs	28	Needs	31
Time	20	Love	24	Want	29

Appendix E

Table #3: Research Question #2: Fathers taking an active role in schooling their children.

Schooling Concepts	# of times
Education	74
Learning	71
Teaching	49
Think	48
Life	43

Appendix F

Table #4: Research Question #3: Fathers fostering lifelong learning in their children.

Joy of Learning Concepts	# of times
Learning	30
Life	14
Think	13
Brain	10
People and Benefit	6

Appendix G

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date Tuesday, April 21, 2015 Protocol Expires: 4/20/2016

IRB Application No: HE1466

Proposal Title: Voices of Tulsa Fathers

Reviewed and Expedited
Processed as: **Continuation**

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): **Approved**

Principal
Investigator(s) :

Darrell H. Mercer
700 N Greenwood
Tulsa, OK 74106

Joseph Grzywacz
Main Hall 2120
Tulsa, OK 74106

Approvals are valid until the given expiration date, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRS office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

- The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

Signature :



Hugh Crethar, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Tuesday, April 21, 2015
Date

VITA

Darrell Hugh Mercer Jr.

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A CHANCE TO SPEAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON FATHERS FROM LOWER INCOME
COMMUNITIES

Major Field: Human Development and Family Science

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2016.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Psychology at University of the Virgin Islands, Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I. in 2013.

Experience:

Voices of Tulsa Father's Study: A study of fathers who reside in lower income areas of Tulsa. The purpose of the study is to give the fathers a chance to discuss their views on fatherhood and eradicate the myth of "dead beat dads."

- Recruitment of Black, White, and Latino Fathers of adolescent children, interview fathers about their fathering experiences as a son and as a father, transcribing interviews, summarizing interviews into case summaries, data organization, data management, and facilitation of "On My Shoulders" Fatherhood Curriculum.

Nonprofit community needs assessment: Learning the needs of the Tulsa nonprofit community in an attempt to alleviate some of the problems that afflict the nonprofit organizations.

Duties Include: Scheduling meetings, literature reviews, organizing nonprofit's contact information, notifying nonprofit members about upcoming events.